



NEWS RELEASE

WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ALLIANCE



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Public Schools Make Key Program Cuts *Survey shows districts face over \$300 million deficit, requiring reductions in academic programming*

MADISON – Survey data collected in March 2011 by the School Administrators Alliance (which represents school leaders such as superintendents, school business officials, principals and special education directors) shows Wisconsin public school districts are proposing significant cuts to instructional areas in order to offset the deep cuts in the proposed 2011-13 State Budget. Meanwhile, State Legislators and the Governor are increasing public tax dollars for private schools through vouchers, without public assessments.

While public school districts struggle to cut programs and raise class sizes, the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) has revised the state's revenue projections to include an additional \$636 million over the next three years. "Clearly, this money must be spent on Wisconsin public schools so that our students are prepared for the future and so our state can prosper," said Miles Turner, Executive Director, Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators.

Woody Wiedenhoef, Executive Director, Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials, confirmed, "It is clear that most local school districts do not see the 2011-13 State Budget proposal as positive as it does not meet the needs of public school children. Wisconsin school districts will dramatically increase class sizes, reduce or eliminate programs like AP classes, music, art, foreign languages, athletics and more. This comes after 18 years of revenue limit belt tightening. Program cuts of this magnitude will impact our economic future. Quality public education creates quality jobs."

Analysis of the district reported survey data shows that the statewide budget gap for school districts is over \$300 million, even after accounting for proposed changes in Act 10 and the 2011-13 State Budget proposal (see Figure 1).

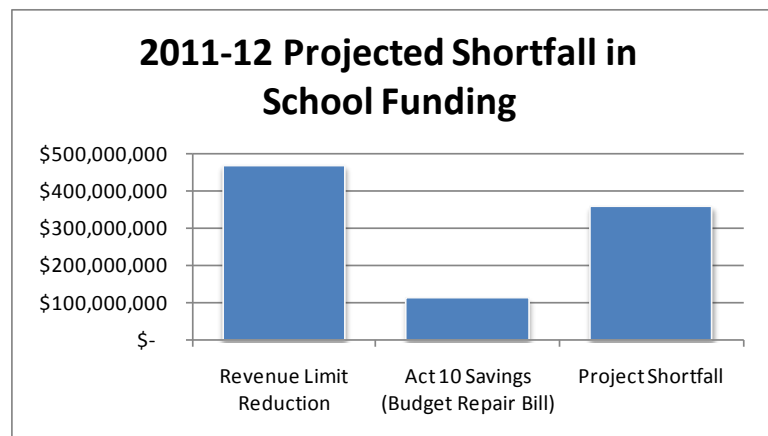


Figure 1: Based on survey data reported by local school districts, the statewide funding shortfall for 2011-12 is over \$300 million.

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“School board members have said the tools are not enough, with revenue limit reductions that amount to a 5.5 percent cut in available resources,” said John Ashley, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards. “School boards across Wisconsin are willing to do their part during this fiscal crisis, but the state needs to scale back the 5.5 percent revenue limit reduction and use some of the new \$636 million for schools.”

Jim Lynch, Executive Director of the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators, shared, “We do understand the financial realities confronting our State, but we do not understand a budget that proposes to cut school aid by \$840 million, while increasing transportation by \$317 million and private school vouchers and independent charter schools by \$41 million. Last week, the U.S. Department of Education announced that Wisconsin leads the nation in graduation rates. The economic and human toll of losing our leadership in public education is daunting. The budget has to reflect shared sacrifice and invest in what matters most.”

“The actions of the Governor and Legislature will require many school districts to reduce programs for all students in order to provide services to students with disabilities as required by federal law, which will reduce the quality of educational programs for years to come,” noted Phil Knobel, Executive Director, Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services.

“If this isn’t about politics, if it is really about what is best and affordable for Wisconsin, then there is absolutely no question we should invest some of this new revenue in public school students,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “Legislators know our schools are in trouble, and they have the ability to do something about it. Stop playing politics and just do it.”

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